The Sherwin-Williams Enameled Medal

This Sherwin-Williams medal was designed to be hung from a ribbon and has been enameled by fusing powdered glass to the metal surface at high temperatures. The image of planet Earth coated with paint, poured from a can marked with the letters “SW,” is the official logo of the Sherwin-Williams Company, based in Cleveland, Ohio, USA. This company, founded in 1866, engages in the manufacture, distribution, and sale of paints, coatings, and other related products. They have retail stores in North and South America, and also in Europe.

Before the era of ready-mixed paint, the paint’s base ingredients were purchased and then carefully mixed by hand. Starting in 1870, Henry Sherwin spent the next ten years attempting to create a premixed liquid paint that could be stored in a can. In 1880, the first can of ready-mixed paint was produced, originally labeled SWP 355, then renamed as Shade K.

The internet is usually the best source for locating information on any given subject, but nothing was found regarding this medal. The Sherwin–Williams Company was contacted by email, and a reply was received from the manager of their corporate archives. The manager stated that this medal appears to be a unique find, as a search of the company’s historical archives yielded no results.

The one remaining avenue of investigation was the name stamped on the reverse side. There are two companies in Canada named Marsh Bros, but one is in the aviation parts business, and the other deals with tractors. An eBay search led to the

discovery of an old button featuring the image of Sir Sam Hughes, with the reverse side stamped “Marsh Brothers, Toronto.” Unlike the first two Canadian companies, this company could have been the manufacturer of the Sherwin-Williams medal.

The history of Sir Sam Hughes was researched to help identify an approximate date for this button. Samuel Hughes was born on January 8th, 1853, in Clarington, one of eight municipalities located within the region of Durham, Ontario. He is best known as Canada’s Minister of Militia and Defence from October 1911 to November 1916. He increased the efficiency of the pre-war militia and helped create the Canadian Expeditionary Force, which was sent to Europe to fight with the Allies. He was knighted for his efforts in 1915, but in November 1916, he was dismissed from his post by Prime Minister Sir Robert Borden. There were several reasons for this, one of which was his championing of the purchase of the Ross rifle for the Canadian army. This weapon quickly gained a reputation for jamming when fired. Sir Samuel Hughes died in August 1921 at the age of 68.

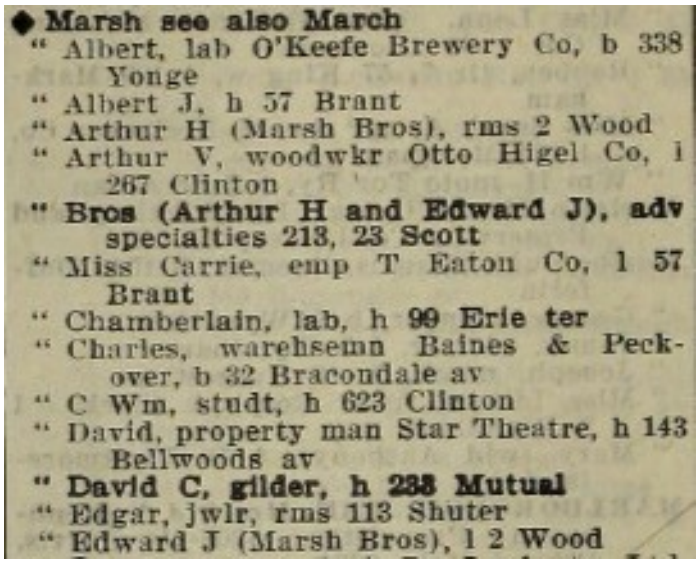
Knowing that Samuel Hughes was dismissed from his post near the end of 1916, it can be assumed this button was manufactured in 1915 or 1916. Another button by Marsh Bros, featuring Admiral Jellicoe, is in the Baldwin collection of Canadiana. Admiral John Jellicoe was the British commander of the Grand Fleet of the Royal Navy that engaged the Imperial German Navy’s High Seas Fleet at the Battle of Jutland in May 1916.

To learn more about Marsh Bros, the city directories for Toronto, Ontario, available from 1833 to 2001, were examined. The years around 1916 were checked, but no listing for this company was found. An internet search for other cities named Toronto led to the discovery of Toronto, Ohio, USA. It would definitely make sense for Sherwin–Williams, with its head office in Ohio, to do business with an American company in the same state.

Toronto, Ohio, with a population of 5,303 (2020 census), is located along the Ohio River and is a short distance from a much larger city called Steubenville, named after Friedrich Wilhelm August Heinrich Ferdinand von Steuben. During the American Revolutionary War against the British Redcoats and their Hessian mercenaries, George Washington appointed Steuben, a Prussian military officer, as Inspector General of the Continental Army. Steuben’s most notable contribution was the creation of a manual called “Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States.” This US Army drill manual continued in use for many decades after the war. For his efforts, Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben was granted U.S. citizenship and a large estate in New York.

The original name for Toronto, Ohio, was Newburg’s Landing. This was eventually changed to Sloane’s Station, and in 1881, there was a vote to rename it to Toronto. This name was inspired by Toronto, Canada, which was held in high regard and was considered worthy of emulation. Many riverboat captains, while loading their barges at Toronto, Ohio, took to calling it “a gem of a city.” This was because the numerous local industries provided most of what was needed, so there was no reason to go elsewhere. Today, this city is called “The Gem City.”

The Marsh Bros button pictured above was manufactured in the United States. It was created as an advertisement for the Anchor-Donaldson Line, which offered transatlantic steamship passenger services from the ports of Glasgow, Moville, and Liverpool in the UK to ports such as Montreal and Halifax on the east coast of Canada, and Portland, Maine, in the United States. This service was launched on October 20, 1916, and continued to operate until 1935.



◆ **Marsh see also March**
" Albert, lab O'Keefe Brewery Co, b 338 Yonge
" Albert J, h 57 Brant
" Arthur H (Marsh Bros), rms 2 Wood
" Arthur V, woodwkr Otto Higel Co, h 267 Clinton
" **Bros (Arthur H and Edward J), adv specialties 213, 23 Scott**
" Miss Carrie, emp T Eaton Co, h 57 Brant
" Chamberlain, lab, h **99 Erie ter**
" Charles, warehsemn Baines & Peckover, b 32 Bracondale av
" C Wm, studt, h 623 Clinton
" David, property man Star Theatre, h 143 Bellwoods av
" **David C, gilder, h 238 Mutual**
" Edgar, jwlr, rms 113 Shuter
" Edward J (Marsh Bros), h 2 Wood

Although one button has been identified as having been manufactured in the United States, an Internet search for Marsh Bros in Toronto, Ohio, yielded no results. However, the elusive Marsh Bros was finally found during an examination of the 1910 city directories for Toronto, Ontario. The word "Bros," printed in bold type, was discovered a few entries below the title section for "Marsh." The 1916 city directory was checked again, and 'Bros" was found, but it was not in bold, so it was easy to miss. Arthur H Marsh and Edward J Marsh are listed as the business owners.

The Toronto city directory pages would have been created and printed with a Linotype machine. This is a hot metal typesetter system, invented in the late 19th century, which remained in use into the 1980s. It increased the speed for producing text three to five times over the manual method of selecting metal characters by hand and arranging them for printing. To further reduce the time required to create a linotyped page, header words such as "Marsh" were employed.

The 1899 edition of the Toronto city directory lists Arthur Marsh as an employee of the Acme Lith Co., with Edward Marsh as an employee of the Macdonald Mfg Co. In 1900, they formed a partnership named Marsh Bros.

Over the years, Marsh Bros has changed its business address several times. In 1900, the office was located at 14 Leader Lane. Today, there is a 17-story building at this location, which looks old enough to have been standing there in 1900. This building is next to the King Edward Omni Hotel, built in 1903. This hotel must have expanded at some point to include the 17-story building. The King Edward Private Residences are located at 22 Leader Lane, but there are no visible unit numbers on any of the other doorways.

In 1905, the directory shows Marsh Bros had moved to Suite 506 - 28 Wellington Street West. There are only modern concrete buildings in this area today.

In 1906 and for the next ten years, the office address was Suite #213, 23 Scott Street. This office building was torn down sometime before 1950, and the land was used as a parking lot until 1980. Today, this location is known as Berczy Park, named in honour of William Berczy, a co-founder of York, later known as Toronto.

In 1917, the office relocated to 4-6, 36 Toronto Street. This building appears to have survived into the modern era. If you have a bite to eat at The Poke Box, located at 36 Toronto Street, you may be lucky enough to sense the ghostly presence of Arthur and Edward Marsh.

Edward Marsh is not listed in the 1926 city directory, and the 1930 edition is the last time Arthur Marsh appears. In 1931, new owners incorporated the business as Marsh Bros Ltd, and the office was relocated to 1201-1202, 21 Dundas Square. This business likely fell victim to the Great Depression of the 1930s, as it is not listed in the 1933 Toronto city directory. The 14-story building at 21 Dundas Square has survived, and the former locations of Marsh Bros are all within walking distance, though not all of the buildings are still standing.

An internet search has revealed many items associated with Marsh Bros. Since Japan was on the Allied side during the First World War from 1914 to 1918, there is a Marsh Bros button emblazoned with the rising sun flag. Another item is a metal beer tray, featuring two distinguished Edwardian gentlemen, facing each other while enjoying a beer. The text directly above their heads states, “With Compliments of John Labatt, Brewer.” There is also a yellow-coloured metal sign advertising Chaffles Coffee, inscribed with “Drink Gold Standard Java and Mocha.” One final example is the cigarette tin with the manufacturer listed as Hudson Scott & Sons, Ltd of Carlisle, England, and Marsh Bros identified as “Agents.”

N. MA. 10 — MARSH BROS. — 1907

Obverse: — In eight lines — MARSH BROS. / 23, SCOTT ST. / TORONTO / ADVERTISING / SIGNS / & / NOVELTIES. / HAVE ALWAYS SOMETHING NEW.

Reverse: — Movable part in center within circle of dots — CALENDAR. 1907

While investigating Toronto, Ohio, a few email inquiries regarding Marsh Bros were sent. Special thanks to Erika Grubbs of the Genealogy/Local History Dept, Schiappa Branch Library, Steubenville, Ohio, who provided the image of the Marsh Bros 1907 business token, which identifies the company as a provider of advertising services.

1916 was a significant year for the Sherwin-Williams Company. On June 26, 1916, Henry Sherwin, co-founder of the company, died in Willoughby, Ohio, aged 73. This company was founded in 1866 and incorporated on July 16, 1884. Since Marsh Bros operated an advertising business from 1900 to 1932, and the Sherwin-Williams Company’s 50th anniversary was in 1916, a celebration of the Golden Jubilee would have been the most likely reason for issuing this enameled medal.

- Ted Skrecky (Victoria, BC, Canada)

Note: Skrzytskyi Numizmatyka Special Editions #001 to #003 are available at archive.org.

This section of space has been filled with the image of a 1912 Canadian one-cent coin. Collecting “diseased” coins is a fun, inexpensive hobby. Bonus: Some coin dealers may give you such a coin and not ask for anything in return.